



## Two - Bad Blood

### Two Days Prior

Dhare examined the scans of the planet he was approaching, a claw tapping the metal control panel. It was a decently large planet covered in large swathes of green. It had a few large bodies of water, two to be exact, around the equator. White wispy clouds floated in the atmosphere covering up portions of land below. The planet, Dto'erra, was where his target seemed to be.

He was scanning for microscopic particles le behind from Faster Than Light travel. Each FTL drive le a different pattern of residue floating freely in space. His readouts showed the faint traces of ion particles from his target here in this orbit.

He also detected the man'dac having landed on the planet somewhere. Much of the planet was covered in temperate d'tosa there would be plenty of places to hide not only his own man'dac but himself. With trees, he could also keep them to avoid leaving a trail that could be followed. Any average Yautja trying to find him would have a difficult time.

As an Elite and Arbitrator, he was no average Yautja. He was superior in skill, intelligence, and size.

His bigger body mass gave him a claw up against the ic'jit. The pau'jit would be easy prey. Their d'tai'kal'dtawould be a good way to exert his dominance and would be gkei'mou against the Young Blood. The hunted would soon dance with the gods or be devoured by the Destroyer.

The battleground would be set in this lush d'to.

A perfect place to set traps galore if he wanted.

Not like there was an alternative choice, anyways.

Dhare engaged his cloak for the ship and became invisible to the Young Blood's radar. He had tailed the ic'jifor weeks now, watching and observing. Alerting his prey now would be incredibly amateur and for his honor, unorgivable.

Insight into one's target led to a successful hunt. His observations also told him that it was a miracle of Paya's mercy that the Young Blood had survived his chiva. This one was sloppy and arrogant, egotistical in his assumption that he could get away with breaking the sacred Code. It was drilled into Yautja from birth and to break it warranted punishment. Sometimes that punishment was death, especially if the accused ran instead of turning himself in.

The Elite Yautja switched his man'dac's autopilot and dipped into the exosphere. His hand maneuvered the vessel at a ninety-degree angle until he broke through the thick wispy clouds of the troposphere. Water condensed in rivulets on his windshield as he punctured lower.

Once flying horizontally over the d'to he was better able to observe the planet. It reminded him of N'ithya. The home of Homo Sapiens humans, where his step-bearer was from. With just a passing glance one would think it was Earth but without the familiar land masses.

Even the atmosphere was nearly identical. The gravity was a tiny percent heavier and slightly richer in oxygen. Such ratios were the ideal conditions for humans if they ever made it this far out of their little sphere of comfort. But more importantly, these readouts also indicated the worst scenario occurred, like his mask being broken, then he would be able to breathe comfortably.

Thank the odds that this planet was in the system's Goldilocks zone, the region around a star where a planet could safely harbor life.

His gkinim'apicked up the ic'jit's man'dac and he landed his own a few hundred yo'hanaway. Once the vessel was settled in a small, cleared area, he went through the process of donning his awi'asa. Each weapon was secured neatly in their place on his person while his systems checked multiple times the results of the first scans. When each data point was confirmed completely, he set out. A few clicks across his gauntlet's keypad retracted the ramp, closed the dock door, and locked it. The final step was to engage the cloak and shield system.

Satisfied that his ship was secured, Dhare surveyed his surroundings.

This part of the planet was in the height of its day. Taan GaaThe sun arc'd high in the sky. Much of the forest canopy dispersed the heat of the sun, slivers of light piercing through. His body timing automatically adjusted to compensate for the slight loss of from his ship.

Leaves on this planet largely resembled those he had seen on Earth, but more vibrantly evergreen. In fact, there was green everywhere; moss grew in carpets on the ground, thick on the tree bark, and lush on the periodic boulders. It was a verdant land. Dhare drove o through the giant ferns towards the ic'jit's ship. Above him in the trees, he heard many noises that were new and unfamiliar to him, his guard on high alert.

Soon enough, as Dhare scaled a d'tto get a better view of the land, he saw the heat signature of the ship. Switching through the various spectrum fields of vision, he quickly came to a startling conclusion.

The pau'ing Young Blood didn't even bother the cloak his ship!

Dhare hu ed, once again wondering how his target had even passed his chiva. Perhaps brawn had been the deciding factor since there was seemingly a lack in brains. The sire and bearer would definitely feel relief once this ignorant fool was sent to Cetanu. Their blood line would once again be mighty and proud; better o without this mur'kha waste of flesh and bone.

He felt pride that most of his own spawn were successful hunters, having passed their own chivas. It was only natural, especially since they were descendants of their clan leader and Dhare's sire, R'rage.

Another quick scan of the d'to found no recent sign of the Yautja so he pressed on. He jumped from tree to tree, his landing silent from centuries of training. His body was a well oiled machine at the age of six-hundred and forty seven. He was in the prime of life for an experienced hunter.

Anticipation boiled in his veins as he scouted the area for traces of broken brush or the faint traces of Yautja scent. Nary a branch or twig had been unnaturally misplaced, but he did find a faint heat signature of a foot leading down a declining slope. More followed, eventually turning into an actual trail through the mud. Judging by the partially dry clay, a light crust having formed over the prints, he ascertained that it was less than an hour old.

The ic'jit was near.

His claws dug into the rough bark of a d'tas as he scaled it, the muscles in his arms and legs bulging with every move. It felt good to dig his talons into a tree and have the height advantage to better survey the d'to. His field of vision granted greater insight to his already sharp eyes and into the horizon. In the canopy he could hear the shrill cries of the wildlife as he jumped from branch to branch, climbing and descending like this, using any that would hold his weight.

He continued on in pursuit of his target. The footprints made way for swaths of le over temperature on trees and ferns at least, until the d'to opened up to a wide roaring river. The vayuh'rammled crisp and slightly brackish. Various low lying Bryophyta grew along the rocky shore, the bright emerald patches standing out among the rushing ju'dha.

He took a whi of the vayuh'to sort through the various alien scents. A er a few moments, he found the scent of Yautja near an outcropping of rock that jutted out and over the river.

The faint notes of kiloun'and dai-shu' trailed further under the large rock until he came upon the remains of a messy nest made of large leaves and a damp fur. There were light claw marks in the hard-packed dirt and a muddy handprint on the le wall of the tiny rocky cave.

Nature had perfectly carved it out to fit two or more Yautja at the most. His target had etched words into the back wall of the shelter, none of them making much sense. There were also various bones scattered about the ground. The sight filled him with more drive to eliminate the ic'jit.

The Young Blood had zererespect for a clean and honorable hunt, nor for the natural world around him.

Yautja were taught to leave no trace of their presence. They couldn't be followed or have a trail that could lead to their technology, much less their existence. Anything that told of their presence could lead to problems in the future and this Young Blood had earned another point in Dhare's c'jit list.

This Young Blood was pushing the bar even lower in the list. Sure, the bar was already low, but this male was driving it into the ground with his skull as hard as he could.

Mur'kha pau'ing kha'bj-te zabin!

He couldn't wait to rip the ic'jit's spine out with his bare hands. To feel the hot blood of his mei'sh'pcover his hands as he bellowed his victory to Cetanu, the Black Warrior. His thw' thrummed with excitement for the battle to come.

Dhare shook his locs about his head as he followed the scent to the river itself. He leaped over it with ease and picked up on fresh footprints leading back into the d'to. Under the thick brush they continued for several yo'hana.

For hours he followed the trail until finally, he could see his target just paces away. Stealthily, he scaled a large ancient d'at sand on his haunches watching the ic'jit.

Easy prey.

No name had been given. No name was necessary. When a Yautja was proclaimed Bad Blood, they were stripped of both their title and name. They even lost the right to be called Yautja, their mere existence a stain upon the species.

This ic'jit had a tan and dirt-brown spotted hide that had an oily sheen to it. His armor was scratched up and dull, many past battles marring the surface. Little care had been done to maintain his paw'asa. The sight gave Dhare another reason to put an end to this pau'it. Many of Bad Blood's locs were swept back into a que at his neck with a strip of leather to enhance his sharp profile. As the final touch, he wore a battered bronze mask, beaten-up and tarnished.

Dhare switched through various spectrums until he could make out the vitals of his target. His large heart thumped calmly without a care in the world — a costly mistake. Down below the ic'jitas busy setting a trap, carefully hiding it in the center of brush. He had a bundle of wrapped meat to the side ready to bait the trap. The small trap would ordinarily take down a beast of considerable size, but its construction and the Bad Blood's technique was sloppy. He would be lucky if he caught anything capable of satiating his hunger.

A mere snack.

One more tick on my'jit list he thought to himself, watching his target place the meat on the trigger.

A er activating an additional function to his cloak, one that enabled total dampening of his vitals, Dhare slowly climbed to another tree to better watch his quarry. He wanted to find a path through the canopy so he could keep up once the ic'jit finished.

It was entirely too early to go for the kill. It was pertinent that he knew the habits of this Yautja.

Being caught unaware when it counted most could be a death sentence. One should always be aware of the possibilities, as he had been taught. There were an infinite amount of threads that could be woven in different directions. Any one of those could end in an ugly mistake.

In his line of work there was no room for mistakes.

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During the following two nights and days, Dhare studied the planet's wildlife. There was an animal that walked on its toes with a long slender body covered in brown fur. A crown of horns decorated its slender equine head, a twin pair of curling horns. Its tail flicked back and forth as it grazed from the low lying plants growing along the base of the tree. The animal displayed no aggression.

It existed as it was.

Seeing such a sight reminded Dhare of the life he had once led.

One where he was stuck on Yautja Prime with days of boring meetings and being a counselor of sorts to mates who fought among each other. Being a peacemaker had been tiresome, but he liked the work.

He helped as many as he could, but that slowly came to be...unfulfilling. Boring, even. There was more out there. More to life than politics and endless droning meetings or playing love doctor.

The life of an Arbitrator was lonely and could be far from the peace that Dhare wanted, but it was the best option currently.

It was too early for retirement.

Snapping the twigs on the forest floor below alerted Dhare that his target was on the move. For hours now Dhare had waited as the ic'jit slipped through the night, unaware of death above. The Young Blood was careless in trying to find shelter and keep quiet — especially with such a bounty on his head. His bounty was worth several hundred credits.

Those credits would come in handy for some upgrades to Dhare's ship that he wanted. His ship was already top-notch technology wise, but he wanted a few things that were out of the norm. There had been new developments that would be a sister clan of Yautja that he wanted to acquire that made be beneficial to hunting Bad Bloods.

Sticking to the trees, he followed the ic'jit. There was no clear path he took, meandering through the forest at a leisurely pace upward to his executioner on the hunt above.

The quiet of the forest was broken, however, when the clouds split apart in the sky as a new ship descended towards the planet. Both Dhare and his target watched as the spaceca continued its descent before leveling out and flying in the direction the ic'jit was headed. It was small, black, and clearly of human origin based on its design and language painted on its side — something he saw when zoning in with his bio-mask.

He hadn't know that humans even ventured out of their little bubble in the universe. Intel suggested they called it the "human sphere". This new information that they did travel beyond the confines of their space would be brought back to the clan at once. Dhare inwardly snarled at the complication.

A human on the planet could make the hunt messy but...the human...could also be the perfect distraction. The diversion he needed to make this hunt easier, despite it already being gkei'mou. Already a plan was forming in his head as to what he would do.

The ic'jit however, was faster. He took o at a breakneck speed through the forest in the direction of the ship.

Muttering to himself some choice words, Dhare followed suit. He kept pace until the forest opened up to a clearing where the ship was landing on the wide patch of yellowing grass. Its tripod legs jutted from its sleek, black arrow of a body. Under its short wings, the bright blue thrusters slowly died back as the ship settled. The gust of wind around the ship cut out.

Compared to Dhare's own ship, it was tiny, enough space for a single passenger.

Dhare watched his target below using his infrared. His now-cloaked prey watched the ship just as sharply as he did.

The a of the cra opened, serving as both a door and a ramp, and a human female exited. She pressed a button on a small device strapped to her wrist and the ramp rose back into the ship. She looked pleased with her surroundings, a small smile pulled at the corners of her human mouth.

His bio-mask immediately identified her as his human target. The one he saved all those years ago!

Decisions would have to be made. Decisions that could mean life or death for the human. If she survived against the ic'jit then he would have free reign to either hunt her or bring her into his custody. He knew she would react in fear at seeing him.

All humans did, his species had certainly garnered a reputation among some of the humans over the years. At the end of the day she was prey. A target that needed to be captured.

As he tracked the ic'jit following her, he took careful note of her form. She had no idea how much danger she was in with two predators stalking her. She was lucky one of them was a er the other and not solely focused on her. Death was very likely in another circumstance.

As she walked further into the d'tto he noticed her graceful and shapely body. She had become slimmer since he had last seen her but also with time, she had become more confident in her supple curves. While she had plush extra around her abs and thighs, strong muscle busted her frame underneath. She was so unlike a yautja female in her decadent so limbs. He couldn't wrap his mind around it. Not even his step-bearer, Artemis, was this so.

Humans had so much variation. That he knew. It was fascinating, however, to see it in person.

Dhare preferred to hunt species other than humans. Bigger game was more of a challenge to him, but he'd heard through hearsay that humans could present one when pushed into a corner.

Regardless, he preferred other creatures to take as trophies. They were bigger and more impressive. Skulls and bones that were easily half his size. Females, and males, knew what wonders his trophy room held.

For some time they followed her as she trekked through the forest, completely unaware of their silent stalking. She hiked for hours, taking breaks and eating a meal. Sweat beaded on her forehead and limbs from the strain. Dhare watched the human sketch pictures of the Bryophyta along the edge of the stream. She walked with the confidence of a seasoned explorer; she knew the land and seemed experienced enough. Too bad she wasn't knowledgeable in the way of knowing whether she was being tracked, her every step watched by multiple eyes.

Eventually she stopped to set up camp. Dhare noted that the sun was beginning to sink towards the horizon, too, and decided that he er that, he would figure out how to deal with the human female.

Rather than keep his pursuit in the trees, he clicked loudly. Immediately the ic'jit stopped in his tracks and turned to survey the d'to around him, his shoulder-length legs kicking around his head. Dhare immediately jumped to a tree to his le and clicked again, keeping up this action to draw his prey away from the human.

Her being involved would only complicate things further.

From tree to tree Dhare hopped, bringing the mur'kha ic'jit right where he wanted him, a nearby clearing. He had picked it up on his initial scans of the planet. The clearing was at the bottom of a hill, surrounded with moss-covered boulders and surrounded with leafy branches. The moon was bright in the sky, allowing enough light for the battle ground to be well-lit.

His Yautja target stood in the center frantically looking around for Dhare. He didn't have the right program installed in his bio-mask to see through the advanced technology that allowed Dhare to hide his heat signature and the sound of his thumping heart. Dhare was granted access to such technology while serving on the clan council.

When the Bad Blood was turned opposite of Dhare, he jumped to the ground and extended his own ki'ct-gadpropping his cloak with a mental command. The ic'jit spun on his heel and hissed at the interloper.

"Arbitrator," spat the Bad Blood.

"Rabbin'," Replied Dhare. He brought up his le arm to project the execution warrant, a red glowing series of Yautja text. "You will pay for the slaughter of helpless sucklings."

"They were in my way," his prey growled, "Such is the way of life with weak beings."

Dhare didn't like that reply. He snarled and began to circle the Bad Blood, clicking a button on his gauntlet that cut the projection. He eyed his opponent, visibly sizing him up to issue the challenge of combat. In this instance it would be to the death. The ic'jit couldn't be allowed to live.

Instead of a verbal response, Dhare let loose a mighty roar that prompted his prey to return the favor. Immediately the Bad Blood was on him.

He leaned to the side to dodge the incoming fist. The knuckles of the ic'jit grazed his armored waist right as Dhare landed a knee in the Bad Blood's stomach. The blow earned a snarl that was followed with the swipe of claws that was blocked by Dhare.

He parried attack a er attack, waiting for the Young Blood to tire out. He didn't have the stamina that Dhare had acquired over the years and neither did he have the patience. Watching this Young Blood wear himself out was just further confirmation that he really was stupid.

Dhare put new parallel scratches in the ic'jit's bronze armor, adding to the myriad of marks already scarring it. He weaved his attacks with perfectly timed parries.

They danced in tune with one another to nothing but the sound of their animalistic growls and snarls. The moonlight provided more than enough light to set the stage of mortal combat. Long had the forest gone silent around them. The instinct to shatter against predators was triggered as soon as the two finally met.

Dhare was deep in concentration when he heard a snap in the woods. The singular staccato sound of a twig being broken rung through the clearing.

Dhare and the ic'jit both ceased their attacks to snap their necks in the direction of the disruption. Immediately the thermal silhouette of the human female came into Dhare's view as she froze mid-step behind a pile of rocks in her failed retreat. His HUD once again reminded him that she was his next target. One who, at the moment, was in grave danger. She stood there for mere moments, the trio frozen as the air filled with a pregnant pause, before the ic'jit bellowed, barreling towards her, giving birth to a chase. Wisely the female ran a er screaming to the heavens.

"Pau'k Dhare grumbled as he took o in pursuit.

Things had just got complicated a er all.

### Dictionary:

Dto - forest  
Man'daca - ship  
ic'jit - Bad Blood  
Pau'jit - bastard  
D'ai'kal' - fight to the death  
Gkei'mou - all too easy  
Chiva - right of passage to adulthood  
N'ithya - Earth (planet in this case)  
Góimaru - Scanners  
Yo'hana - yards  
Awi'asa - armor  
Taan Guan - midday (noon)  
Sur'ah - Sun

Pau'king - Fuckling  
Mur'kha - Stupid  
Dte - land  
Vayuh'ta - air  
Ju'dha - water  
Kiloun - wood  
Dai-shui - Yautja musk  
C'jit - shit  
Kha'bj-te - reckless  
Zabin - insect  
Mei'shan - insect  
Therei - blood  
Ki'ct-pa - wristblades  
HUD - Heads Up Display

Big shoutout to my beta reader/editor i-blank-et-dormyname. She helped perfect this!

**Continue reading next part**